

Submitted 1273 12/10/16
The second session of the Commission of Fine Arts in the fiscal year

1917

1917 was held in their office at 1729 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, D. C., on

October 6, 1916. The following members were present:

Mr. Moore, the Chairman;

Mr. Olmsted;

Mr. Hastings;

Mr. Adams;

Mr. Weir;

Mr. Platt;

Mr. Kendall;

also Colonel William W. Harts, U. S. Army, their Secre-

tary and Executive Officer.

The meeting was called to order at 9.15 a. m. and immediately proceeded to the business before it.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING: The minutes of the preceding meeting, held July 14, 1916, and the minutes of the Committee held at the Century Club, New York City, on Tuesday, September 5, 1916, were presented by the Secretary and approved.
2. RESOLVE FOR THE GALLATON, ALABAMA, MONUMENT: The Chief of Engineers referred to the Commission for a report a number of sketch designs submitted by Mr. Charles Beck, sculptor, of New York City for the \$5,000 monument to be erected by

the United States at Tallapoosa, Alabama, in commemoration of the soldiers who, 336
under General Andrew Jackson, defeated the Creek Indians there in 1814. Mr. Meek
has been selected by the War Department to prepare the design. Colonel Vents read
several letters from Mr. Meek regarding the designs submitted and a letter of
transmittal from Captain Sturdevant, the local officer of the Corps of Engineers
in charge of the erection of this monument, and also a preliminary report on the
designs which Mr. Adams had submitted for consideration at this meeting. The Com-
mission agreed with Mr. Adams that the design No. 2 is the most likely to bring
out a satisfactory development for the site which the monument is to occupy; and
that the final design should be presented in the form of a plaster model, not only
with the emblem and inscription indicated but with the drawing and projection of
the general lines of the monument carefully considered. The Commission felt that
money should be saved in sculptural detail and, instead, the material selected should
that could be transported to that site be used. It was further decided to forward
the inscriptions about the three points, one corner of the square, to be submitted
to the Chief of Engineers. Mr. Adams was authorized as a committee with power to
act for the Commission, and a letter enclosed the suggestion to the War Department
that Mr. Meek consult with Mr. Adams in the further study of his designs. (See

2 submitters

Exhibit A).

3. LANDSCAPE TREATMENT OF RAWLINS SQUARE: Colonel Davis stated to the Commission that Congress had given him funds for the improvement of Rawlins Square, and that, as work would shortly have to be undertaken on these improvements, he had prepared a plan which followed suggestions previously made by Mr. Olsted as a member of the committee in the matter and which he laid before the Commission at this time. The central feature of the proposed scheme of improvement is to constitute the Noble Memorial Fountain for the erection of which Congress has already given permission to the American Society of Civil Engineers. Mr. Glenn Brown, the architect for the Noble Memorial Committee, appeared in consultation and Mr. Olsted also explained the problem. A number of suggestions were made regarding details of the plan but it was approved in general. Suggestions to Mr. Brown regarding details of a basin and immediate setting for his memorial included that the basin be raised in size and be restricted as to form so as to permit more freedom of movement around it.

4. COMFORT STATION FOR MONTREAL PARK: Colonel Davis next laid before the Commission a sketch design for a public comfort station to be located in Montreal Park and also asked the Commission's suggestions regarding a definite location for

the structure. Two tentative locations were given on a number of plans which accompanied the sketch for the building. The suggestion was made by the Commission that the least conspicuous building possible be put in and that the more the comfort station would look like a garden wall, the better it would be. As to the location, the suggestion was made that it should be strung out along the cemetery wall near the corner as much as possible, Mr. Olmsted indicating how this could be accomplished in the best way, and that no formal treatment be permitted in front of the ledge house. ~~~~~

5. MEADE MEMORIAL: Colonel Harts brought up for discussion the situation existing with respect to the Meade Memorial. He stated that sometime ago he had called the attention of the Governor of Pennsylvania to the bill that had been introduced for the extension of the Botanic Garden into East and West Center Park. The Governor had referred this to the Secretary of the Meade Memorial Commission, Mr. John W. Brazier, who had countered the information to name that site for the Meade Memorial given by Congress in the Botanic Garden and had thereby nullified and that for some reason, a report had, to Mr. Brazier, an additional sum of \$55,000 would be necessary for that memorial before it could be located elsewhere.

In order not to be involved in a long-drawn controversy, Colonel Harts added that he had called up Attorney-General Brown of the State of Pennsylvania, a member of that Commission, on the long-distance telephone and explained the matter to him, and that, during the conversation, he had an opportunity to mention that it was doubtful whether any satisfactory design would be secured with their present architects. Mr. Brown discussed this matter with Mr. Frasier, and Mr. Frasier again construed it in his favor to the effect that their architects were giving excellent satisfaction but that the sculptor was unfit to do the work. He informed Colonel Harts of this opinion and added that Mr. Brown would be in Washington to consult with Colonel Harts on this subject in the near future. Colonel Harts therefore asked the Commission's instructions as to how to proceed. After discussion of these features the Commission informed Colonel Harts that if the World Memorial Commission had an inclination to change their artists they should be referred to the report of their architectural advisor, but that if no change was made in the artists, all the Commission could do in any event would be to pass upon the designs as they are submitted and accept none until one absolutely satisfactory had been presented.

6. SCHOOL ARCHITECTURE IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: The Commission next called the attention of the Commission to the problem of the type of school archi-

ecture continued in use in the District of Columbia. He explained that shortly after the Commission was organized the District Commissioners sought their cooperation with respect to structures being erected by the municipality under federal appropriations. The Commission heartily agreed to assist them and a number of conferences were held. Among the first designs submitted were a number of school houses, some of which were designed in the Elizabethan style. The Commission then called attention to the fact that that style was not suitable for Washington but that the Georgian, or Colonial, style adopted by the early designers for public buildings in the city was more suitable and should be followed. The advice of the Commission was heeded in one or two instances but the construction of the new Central High School, the Park View School in Petworth, and the Junior School on First Street above New York Avenue, showed that the recommendations of the Commission, despite the earlier assurance, had not been followed. Furthermore, that, in spite of the intention of the Commissioners in the early conferences with the Commission of Fine Arts and of the Executive Order of the President which reads that the designs for all structures which affect in any way the appearance of the city should be submitted to the Commission of Fine Arts and which the President specially requested the District Commissioners to follow, the designs for these school buildings and other structures

erected under the municipality in the past years had not been placed before the Commission. Mr. Moore then read a statement of the facts in the case, rehearsing chronologically the steps taken with regard to such architecture, and the relations with the District Commissioners in this connection, and protesting against continuing the use of the Elizabethan style of architecture. The Commission unanimously agreed that their views as shown in the statement should be laid before the District Commissioners, and placed the whole matter for attention in the hands of the Chairman and the Secretary with power to proceed. For letter transmitted see Exhibit B.

7. BOTANIC GARDEN: At the New York Committee meeting on September 5, Chairman Glayden's request for all the data the Commission had with respect to the enlargement of the Botanic Garden westward into East and West Chester Park, as proposed in the recent bill introduced by Senator Cullinger, was discussed and Mr. Moore appointed a committee to prepare the report. He took the opportunity to discuss a number of points which he felt should be elaborated in the report and the whole matter was again gone over in all its phases. The report will be attached as one of the exhibits to the minutes of the New York Committee meeting on September 5, last.

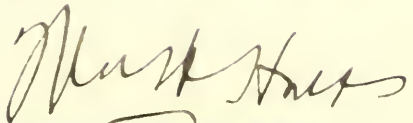
8. STRUCTURES IN LANDSCAPE REGION: The Secretary called attention to

the fact that the Commission had not yet made a formal report regarding the designs for effluent and influent gate and lock houses and a small bridge to be erected in the Anacostia area as an incident to the Anacostia reclamation project, and regarding which Colonel Flagler, the Engineer Officer in charge of that project, had asked the Commission's criticisms. Mr. Kendall and Mr. Olsted were appointed a committee to consider these plans and report at their earliest convenience. *See Exhibit C*

9 . PLAN BY CLARENCE HOWARD FOR THE TRIBUTION OF THE RIVER BETWEEN THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT AND THE POTOMAC RIVER: This plan had been prepared by Mr. Howard in progressive consultation with the Commission, and now purported to show in final conclusive form results of all the study given it. The plan received the definite approval of the Commission, but was referred to Mr. Olsted and Mr. Platt as a sub-committee to check up the minor details.

The Commission then lunched, having as their guests Colonel Flagler, in charge of the local United States Engineer Office and of the construction of the new Key Bridge, - Mr. Nathan Ayoth, consulting architect in the designing of the Bridge, - and Mr. Tullman, one of the Assistant Engineers in Colonel Flagler's office. After lunch Colonel Flagler took the Commission and Colonel Harts on his Harbor Boat for an inspection of the river as far as to the Key Bridge, during which a number

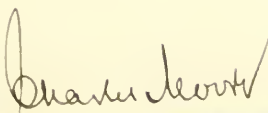
of sketches prepared by Mr. Wyeth were studied with particular attention to a new two-deck design which both he and Colonel Flagler particularly favored. The Commission thought this design was excellent, and complimented him on the progress made. A number of suggestions were made to simplify it, as, for instance, that no relief work appear on the spandrels but that a large smooth surface be adhered to. From the site of the proposed bridge they stepped up the Anacostia River as far as the Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge, inspecting the water front along the way and acquainting the new members with the reclamation work going on in the Anacostia section. On this occasion offered to discuss with Colonel Flagler a number of points concerning the details of the work progressing under his charge and suggestions were made as to the treatment of the proposed basin walls in the Anacostia section and possibilities of dumping into the residual areas according to some topographical plan. Leaving the boat at the Engineer Pier on the Washington Channel, the Commission proceeded to Meridian Hill Park in order to acquaint the new members with the work going on there. The Commission then adjourned at 5.00 p. m. subject to the call of the Chairman.



Colonel, U. S. Army,

Secretary and Executive Officer.

Approved:



CHAIRMAN.

Office C. of E., September 16, 1916. To the Officer in Charge, Public Buildings and Grounds, Secretary and Executive Officer, Commission of Fine Arts, WASHINGTON, D.C.

1. Referred.

2. Action by the Commission of Fine Arts, in accordance with the statements in the foregoing letter, is requested. By command of the Chief of Engineers:

C. KELLER

Lt. Col., Corps of Engineers.

Eight inclos., accomp.

93577/115-Correspondence.

/116 to 122-Sketches.

2d Indorsement.

The Commission of Fine Arts, November 27, 1916 - To the Chief of Engineers, USA

1. Returned.

2. The Commission of Fine Arts have inspected the various studies submitted by the first indorsement and have read the correspondence transmitted therewith.

In their opinion design numbered 2 is most likely to bring out a satisfactory development for the site which this monument is to occupy, but they suggest that money be saved in sculptural detail and, instead, the biggest block of stone used that can be transported to that site. They recommend that the final design be presented in the form of a plaster model, not only with the inscription and other sculptural details indicated but with the drawing and proportions of the general lines of the proposed monument carefully considered. The Commission appointed Mr. Herbert Adams of 131 West 11th Street, New York City (their sculptor member) a committee on the Tallapoosa Monument, and suggest that the artist be requested to consult him regarding artistic details of the monument before rendering it in final model form.

3. The Commission feel that the inscription proposed under paragraph 2 is faulty in that it does not state that the monument is being erected by the Congress of the United States, as is customary. They suggest the following revisions:

Erected by the Congress of the United States
on Horse Shoe Battleground. Here General Andrew Jackson
and his brave men broke the power of the Creek
Indians under Chief Menawa, March 29, 1814.

By direction of the Commission of Fine Arts:

WM. W. HARTS

Colonel, U. S. Army,

93577/114 & 115 & 118 to 122 retd.

Secretary and Executive Officer.

A

Office of the Secretary and Executive Officer, Commission of Fine Arts, Public Buildings and
Commission, Secretary and Executive Officer, Commission of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C.

1. Reference.

2. Action by the Commission of Fine Arts, in accordance with the provisions
in the foregoing letter, is requested. By command of the Chief of Engineers:

W. L. R. 1918

1st time, Commission of Fine Arts.

Right to be considered.
9557/114-Continued.
114 to 122-Continued.

3d Information.

The Commission of Fine Arts, November 27, 1918 - to the Chief of Engineers, USA

1. Reference.

2. The Commission of Fine Arts have requested the various studies submitted by
the artist and have read the correspondence transmitted therewith.
In their opinion design number 7 is most likely to bring out a satisfactory
development for the site which this monument is to occupy, and they suggest that
it be used in its original form and, instead, the design of stone work
be incorporated in the design. They recommend that the final design be
presented in the form of a plaster model, not only with the suggestion and
other architectural details indicated but with the location and position of the
general lines of the proposed monument carefully considered. The Commission
appointed Mr. Robert Adams of 181 West 11th Street, New York City (their secretary
number) a committee on the Tallapoosa monument, and suggest that the artist be
requested to consult his regarding artistic details of the monument before com-
mitting it to final model form.

3. The Commission feel that the investigation proposed under paragraph 1 is
in that it does not state that the monument is being erected by the Congress of
the United States, as is customary. They suggest the following revision:

Presented by the Congress of the United States
on West Side Baltimore. Here General Robert Adams
and old grave men show the power of the State
Indian under Chief Mowat, March 15, 1918.

By direction of the Commission of Fine Arts:

W. L. R. 1918

Chief of Engineers, U. S. Army
Secretary and Executive Officer.

9557/114 & 115 & 116 to 122 continued.

November 8, 1916.

Sirs:

The Commission of Fine Arts view with dismay the erection throughout the District of Columbia of school buildings designed after an unusual, inharmonious and incongruous style of architecture, and presenting bad examples of that style. The Commission believe that Elizabethan architecture is unsuited to Washington, and that the buildings erected after that fashion are unworthy examples of that style chosen. The members of the Commission from its organization have unanimously advised adherence to the Colonial style for school buildings in the District of Columbia. This fact has been brought to the attention of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia whenever the advice of the Commission was asked.

The Commissioners of the District of Columbia, on November 3, 1910, five months after the organization of the Commission of Fine Arts, addressed to the Commission a communication in which it was stated that the District of Columbia constructs annually public buildings costing in excess of \$500,000, including school buildings, fire-engine houses, public convenience stations, and the like. Two-thirds of these buildings, the letter stated, are designed by the Municipal Architect, and one-third by architects in private practice in the City of Washington, the selection being left to the Washington Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the architects so selected working under the supervision of the Municipal Architect.

The Commissioners further said that "inasmuch as the municipal structures must add to or detract from the appearance of the city, the Commissioners have the honor to request the Commission's advice and criticism on plans for municipal structures, and would sincerely appreciate any services of this character which the Commission may feel able to render."

On November 22, following, the Commission advised the Commissioners of the District of Columbia that the Commission of Fine Arts would be glad to comply with the request of the District Commissioners and to undertake the duty suggested in their letter.

On February 15, 1911, the Commission reported on designs for three buildings submitted by the Commissioners on February 11: - an engine house on Georgia Avenue, a manual training school on Wisconsin Avenue, and a normal school at the corner of Eleventh and Harvard streets, NW. The design of the engine house was approved and commended; the design of the manual training school was approved as "straight-forward and good" with the opinion expressed that the result should be satisfactory provided the details be properly drawn. This last design was Georgian, or Colonial. This style had been used in the Western High School, both in the original building and in the one constructed after that building was burned.

The normal school, however, was designed in the Elizabethan style. The Commission objected to the use of that style as ill adapted to fulfill the problems of school architecture in Washington, and as drawing into the City of Washington an incongruous and inharmonious style. The Commissioners said that it was then too late to make a new design for that particular building. The Commission, therefore, limited their report to calling attention to what they considered defects in the design itself. Looking to the future, however, the Commission said:

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"In the opinion of the Commission the general aspect of the District of Columbia would be improved if some uniform style of school architecture could be adopted and adhered to; and the same may be said in respect to engine houses and other public buildings. The adoption of a style for each class of public buildings would not in any way prevent originality in adapting a specific building to its particular needs; and in Washington where the architecture is of so heterogeneous a nature, similarity in public buildings would add much to the impressiveness of the city. We urge that immediate attention be given to this subject with the view of adopting certain styles of architecture which would be harmonious among themselves, and would also be adapted to the particular purposes in views."

On November 11, 1911, the plans for a colored normal school on Georgia Avenue were submitted. The design was again in the Elizabethan style, and the Commission wrote to the Commissioners on January 31, 1912:

"When the designs of the normal school to be erected at the southwest corner of Eleventh and Harvard streets, N.W., were submitted to us last year we were given to understand that the necessity for the prompt erection of the school building and other circumstances made it out of the question to redesign the building completely, and our criticisms and suggestions, both by letter and in personal conferences with the architect, were therefore directed primarily to the amendment of certain features, without regard to any change from the Elizabethan style adopted. We called attention, however, to the importance of harmony of style in the schoolhouses of the District. That point was made because we assumed that the building in question, which was not in harmony with the architectural traditions and associations which have become established in Washington, was the result of individual preference in an isolated case and might be followed by others equally individual in character. But from what was said to us informally by the Municipal Architect and from the present attempt to follow the Elizabethan style in the colored normal school there appears to be a deliberate effort to secure a certain consonance among the school buildings by adopting that style for use in all of them. We are unanimously of the opinion that the Elizabethan style, which was the expression of an age and life quite foreign to our times, and which is peculiarly associated with a different country and a different climate, is ill adapted and inappropriate for public buildings of the present day in Washington. We believe that we should follow the traditions established by the early architecture in this capital, which adhered to classical traditions while exhibiting great freedom in adaptation to varying practical requirements, ranging from simple brick structures (such as the Octagon) to the White House itself. The architecture of today should be evolved from the architecture of those times, adhering to the same classical traditions, with equal freedom of expression in the practical solution of every problem. With these principles in view we recommend that the present design for the colored normal school be abandoned and the problem be restudied on the lines suggested above, with a view to maintaining the Washington tradition in all future school buildings."

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The advice of the Commission was taken in the case of this normal school, 407 which was redesigned after the Colonial style.

The new Central High School, occupying a conspicuous site in Washington, was designed after the Elizabethan style, and at least two other schools have recently been so designed. These designs were not submitted to the Commission of Fine Arts, notwithstanding the request of the President (delivered to the Commissioners of the District of Columbia on March 5, 1914, and acknowledged by them on April 3, 1914) requesting that they "consult the Commission of Fine Arts respecting structures and other projects in contemplation under the District Government which may affect in any important way the appearance of the city."

It cannot be claimed and substantiated that the Colonial type of architecture does not lend itself with equal facility in the construction of school buildings when compared with the Elizabethan type, for the arrangement of windows, lighting facilities, &c, can all be equally well accommodated. The adoption by John Hopkins University of the Colonial type for their university buildings emphasizes this contention, and architects skilled in the use of that style are pronounced in their opinion that the advantages are as great with the Colonial. In the question of expense, too, the Colonial has the advantage of being more economical in both design and materials, leaving the main subject of difference between these two types of architecture one of taste. The Commission of Fine Arts feel strongly that mistakes in taste are now being made.

If it shall be objected that the limit of cost makes it impossible to secure better results, the answer is that the Central High School is fussy, restless, and thin in aspect. The very features which are relied on to mark the style of architecture might have been left off with a considerable saving of expense while at the same time making the building conform more nearly to Elizabethan precedents. The Commission further desire to emphasize the fact that even in the instances where the Elizabethan style has been selected it has not been adhered to, so that these buildings lack the simplicity and charm which characterize Elizabethan architecture at its best.

Now that a new building for the Eastern High School is about to be constructed, the Commission of Fine Arts believe that the Commissioners of the District of Columbia owe it to the people of the United States (who are concerned about the harmonious development of their Capital) to discontinue the attempt to impose on the city of Washington a style of architecture not in accord with the established precedents.

From every point of view departures from sound and established principles have resulted in a detriment to the appearance of the city of Washington.

By direction of the Commission:

Respectfully,

WM. W. HARTS
Colonel, U. S. Army,
Secretary and Executive Officer.

The Board of Commissioners
of the District of Columbia,
Washington, D. C.

The advice of the Commission was taken in the case of this normal school, which was redesigned after the Colonial style.

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It cannot be claimed and substantiated that the Colonial type of architecture does not lend itself with equal facility in the construction of school buildings when compared with the Elizabethan type, for the arrangement of windows, lighting facilities, etc., can all be equally well accommodated. The adoption by John Hopkins University of the Colonial type for their university buildings suggests this contention, and architects skilled in the use of that style are pronounced in their opinion that the advantages are as great with the Colonial. In the question of expense, too, the Colonial has the advantage of being more economical in both design and materials, leaving the main subject of difference between these two types of architecture one of taste. The Commission of Fine Arts feel strongly that mistakes in taste are now being made.

It is shall be objected that the limit of cost makes it impossible to secure better results, the answer is that the Central High School is costly, restlessness, and thin in aspect. The very features which are relied on to retain the style of architecture might have been left off with a considerable saving of expense while at the same time making the building conform more nearly to Elizabethan precedents. The Commission further desire to emphasize the fact that even in the instances where the Elizabethan style has been selected it has not been adhered to, so that these buildings lack the simplicity and charm which characterize Elizabethan architecture at its best.

Now that a new building for the Western High School is about to be constructed, the Commission of Fine Arts believe that the Commissioners of the District of Columbia owe it to the people of the United States (and are concerned about the harmonious development of their Capital) to discontinue the attempt to impose on the city of Washington a style of architecture not in accord with the established precedents.

From every point of view departures from sound and established principles have resulted in a detriment to the appearance of the city of Washington.

By direction of the Commission:

Respectfully,

WM. W. HARRIS
Colonel, U. S. Army,
Secretary and Executive Officer.

The Board of Commissioners
of the District of Columbia,
Washington, D. C.

November 9, 1916.

My dear Colonel:

In accordance with the request in your letter of August 25th last, and with reference to the Commissions' report of September 8th, the Commission have examined the architectural features of the proposed influent and effluent gate houses, boat lock and bridge to be constructed on the Anacostia Flats and advise as follows:

In their ensemble the Commission find the designs acceptable, and, as you have already been advised, there appears to be no reason why the foundations should not be constructed in accordance therewith. The designs for the superstructure, however, ought to be completely restudied by an experienced architectural designer. Without altering the general arrangements from an engineering point of view the structures can readily be made satisfactory in appearance, but only by such a general restudy. In other words, it is felt that just as the services of competent engineers are essential to the proper construction of the bridge and the buildings, so their architectural features can be treated adequately only by a trained architect.

To mention but a few of the revisions necessary, the Commission call attention to the following items:

Effluent Gate and Lock House:

The architectural mouldings throughout.
Proportion of columns.
Window and door cornices.
Balcony.

Stone quoins should be introduced on the second story.

Influent Gate House:

The general mass of the building is satisfactory.

Among the features suggested for revision are the following:

The horizontal divisions, of which there are too many.
The quoins, which should run to the eaves.
The main doorways and windows.

The Allen Bridge over the Lake:

The general ensemble of this bridge is good. The revisions should include:

The mouldings throughout.

The bridge arches, which should be one-centered and not three.

The section through the cornice.

The pier balconies.

By direction of the Commissions:

Very truly, yours,

WM. W. HARTS

Colonel, U. S. Army,

Secretary and Executive Officer.

Lieut. Col. C. A. F. Flagler,
Corps of Engineers, United States Army,
In charge, United States Engineer Office,
Washington, D. C.

A B C

The History of the Book

The history of the book is a story of its own making. It is a story of the book's journey from the pen of the author to the hands of the reader. The book is a product of the author's imagination and the reader's interpretation. The book is a product of the author's imagination and the reader's interpretation. The book is a product of the author's imagination and the reader's interpretation.

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